

show that absolute monarchy has no foundation in mediaeval French history.

The kings of ancient Gaul, according to Hotman, were not hereditary, but elective, and exercised no unlimited or arbitrary authority. They were no less subject to the people than the people were to them. The Romans deprived the Gauls of their liberty, but they did not succeed in killing the spirit of freedom. From this tyranny they were delivered by the Franks, German freemen who established the kingdom of Franco-Gallia. The Franks, like the ancient Gauls, elected their kings, who held the throne on certain conditions, and deposed them if they failed to fulfil these conditions. There was no certain rule of succession, the choice of the king depending on the will of the council of the people, though it usually elected a member of the royal family for the time being. In this council, annually convened, the supreme administrative power was lodged. Its modern representative is the States-General, and it combined, like them, the three elements of kingly, aristocratic, and popular government, in whose consort lies the harmony of the commonwealth. A most wise institution, for it is essential to liberty that the State should be governed by the authority and advice of those whose interests are so closely concerned, and who should therefore be careful to control the king's ministers. The council of the king tends to consult only the royal advantage ; the council of the people, the advantage of the kingdom. For this purpose the council or parliament, *i.e.*, the Estates, of the nation met once a year, and every king who ignores this custom is a violator of the law of nations (Hotman holds that all States were anciently governed by a parliamentary council) and an enemy of human society. In those ancient days the king was not surrounded with the meretricious pomp which ministers to his vanity in these degenerate times, for he rode to the place of meeting in an ox-waggon ; and only as the representative of the people, sitting on the golden throne in the midst of the assembly, was he the bearer of the royal majesty. How unlike these profane days of ours, when the king is styled your majesty, whether he sings, or dances, or trifles with his women. The authority of the council is supreme, and embraces all affairs of State—the election or